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DOCUMENTS

THE JESUIT MISSIONS IN 1773

The Church in the United States will hardly ever again be placed in a position so perilous as that which occurred during the years of the Suppression of the Society of Jesus (1773-1814). When the Society was formally suppressed by Pope Clement XIV, it became the unpleasant duty of Bishop Richard Challoner of the London District to announce this lamentable fact to the members of the Society living in the American Colonies.¹ And the blow which had fallen on that great Religious Congregation was hardest to accept in the midst of the difficulties which surrounded the infant Church of the United States. Fortunately, as the letters which passed between Challoner and the Propaganda show, the Church was grateful towards these valiant sons and allowed them to remain at their post of duty. It was recognized that, if they were not permitted to go on with their apostolic work as seculars, the Missions in the English Colonies would collapse.² These Missions, as we can see from the Maps appended to Hughes' *History of the Society of Jesus in North America*, were extensive. The two following documents give us a semi-official list of the congregations or parishes, and of the educational institutions under their care at the time.

I

The first is taken from a *Relation* made by Father John Mattingly, dated September 6, 1773.³ He tells us that the principal House of the Society was then at Port Tobacco in Charles County, where usually three Jesuits formed the community. The next in order of dignity was the House at New Town in St. Mary's County, which formed a sort of "Collegium," as in the early days of the Missions in England, and from which the Fathers attended the various congregations within a radius of 20 miles and more on Sundays and holydays of obligation. In this way Mass was said once a month in the surrounding districts. The *Relation* goes on to explain how thoroughly the work was done: from early morning until about 11 o'clock confessions were heard, and then Mass was said, Holy Communion given, and at the end of Mass a sermon was preached and points of doctrine explained. All these ministrations were gratuitous and only voluntary offerings were accepted. Among the varied labors of their ministry, the hardest was that of visiting the sick and dying. On account of the distance separating their flock, one from another, long journeys had often to be made. The Fathers themselves took no part in the secular affairs going on around them and were therefore held in high regard by Catholics and non-Catholics. They all felt the need of a bishop for the administration of Confirmation, but they recognized the difficulty of establishing a bishopric in Maryland in view of the fact that the nonconformist element were averse to the presence

¹ Cf. HUGHES, *History of the Society of Jesus in North America*, Text, Vol. i, p. 606.

² For a list of the Jesuits on the Missions at this time, cf. TREACY, *Old Catholic Maryland and its early Jesuit Missionaries*, pp. 167-183.

³ The only Father John Mattingly mentioned by Foley in the *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* (Vol. vii, p. 494), is one born in Maryland, January 25, 1745. He entered the Society in Belgium, September 7, 1766. He died in 1807.

of an Anglican bishop in the community. The Jesuit Missions were fairly well provided for, owing to the excellent care and administration of the property they possessed from the original grants made to them by Calvert. Some of the Fathers resided with private families, as chaplains, and were thus enabled to extend their missionary labors to the surrounding towns. The Catholics at that time in Maryland and Pennsylvania numbered about 20,000. In Maryland there was practically complete freedom of worship. But it was more restrained than in Pennsylvania, where the Church was free.

(Archivio della S.C. de Prop. Fide—Scritture riferite nei Congressi. America centrale. Dal Canada all'istmo di Panama dal 1673 a tutto il 1775. Volume I.)

(Fol. 608) Anno 1764 missionarii in Marylandia numerati sunt 17; anno 1771, 23; anno vero currente 20.

Principalis eorum residentia Portobacco vocatur, in provincia, quae dicitur Charlescounty, ubi tres in communitate vivunt.

Secunda residentia Newtown appellatur in provincia Sanctae Mariae ubi pariter tres ordinario simul degunt, unde ad varias capellas, quae "congregationes" dicuntur, 10, 15 vel etiam viginto et amplius milliaribus dissitas, diebus dominicis et festis excurrunt ad functiones suas obeundas; ita ut in qualibet capella semel in mense missa celebretur, sacramenta administrantur, et verbum Dei praedicetur; in principalioribus autem bis vel saepius, pro numero et necessitate fidelium. Ea vero omnia hoc fere ordine procedunt. A summo mane usque ad undecimam horam confessiones accipiunt; deinde missam celebrant, et sacram communione distribuunt, finita missa concio ad populum habetur, et doctrina christiana explicatur.

Ministeria omnia gratis exercent, ita ut ne dona quidem sponte oblata ullo pacto admittant.

Inter varios ministerii evangelici labores, quos suscipiunt, non exiguus ille est, qui in visitandis infirmis et moribundis consistit. Cum enim non simul in oppidis vel vicis collecti incolae degant, sed separatim et sejunctim quaelibet familia suo in praedio, diu noctuque, aestate et hyeme, ut eorum necessitatibus sublevandis adesse possint, longinquis et molestis itineribus obnoxii semper sint, necesse est.

Vitam ducunt, quantum eorum ministerium patitur, a mundi conversatione remotam; unde exemplum non est ut quis eorum publicis spectaculis, vel aliis profanis hominum coetibus interfuerint. Hinc fit ut in magna veneratione, non solum a catholicis, sed etiam ab haereticis habeantur. Quae omnia cum magnam subjectionem inducant, hominesque a praecipuis huius vitae oblectamentis removeant, qui ad eam missionem destinantur, magnae sint virtutis oportet. Nullus adhuc episcopus eas in partes unquam penetravit, qui beneficium sacramenti confirmationis, in tanto perversionis periculo quam maxime necessarium, fidelibus illis administraret. Hoc vero inde praecipue factum est, quod puritanicae sectae sequaces ibi praevaleant, qui cum bellum continuum cum ordine episcopali gerant, id effecerunt, ut nullus unquam ecclesiae anglicanae episcopus ibi sedem collocare ausus fuerit. In quo catholici eorum exemplum imitandum sibi putarunt, ne ansam haereticis praeberent in ecclesiam catholicam persecutionem excitandi.

In duabus residentis seu collegiis supra memoratis, terras et praedia possident sat ampla, quae omnia ad eorum sustentationem necessaria suppeditant. Haec vero ab ipsius coloniae initio tenere coeperunt ex ipsius proprietarii consensu, pernobiles viri Domini Cecili Calvert Hibernus Paris titulo Baltimore, cui Carolus primus rex Angliae hanc provinciam dono concessit, et a quo religiosi Societatis Jesu ad hanc vineam excolendam fuerunt invitati.

Alias etiam domos in aliis provinciis possident, ubi separatim et longe ab invicem disjuncti habitant, et, ni fallor, terras habent annexas sufficientes ad victum et alia

vitae commoda subministranda. Quidam denique in privatis familiis morantur, ubi capellanorum simul et missionariorum munere funguntur.

Praedia et agri, quorum sunt domini, si debito modo administrarentur, ad majorem missionariorum numerum sustentandum sufficerent: at quoniam ob paucitatem operariorum spiritualium et continuam in rebus ad ministerium evangelicum spectantibus occupationem, animum ad temporalia applicare non vacat saepe accidit ut agri vel male colantur, vel fructus eorum magna ex parte dissipentur.

[In another hand] *I cattolici delle due provincie di Marilandia e Pensilvania saranno circa ventimila. L'esercizio della religione nella prima è quasi libero; nella seconda è totalmente libero. Numerus missionariorum in Anglia anno 1771 fuit 137 ut constat ex catalogo.*

II

The second of these documents, which is to be found in the same volume of the Propaganda Archives, is apparently of a later date than the *Relation* of Father Mattingly. It purports to give a complete catalogue of all the Missions of the Society in the United States.⁴ The number of Jesuit Priests was twenty-six at the time. There were twenty-five Scholastics, ten Novices, twenty-five Lay Brothers, with nine Lay Novices—making a total of ninety-five members in the Society. The different congregations are given, with their approximate distances from the central Houses.

(*Archivio della S. C. de Prop. Fide—Scritture riferite nei Congressi. America centrale. Dal Canada all'istmo di Panama dal 1673 a tutto il 1775. Volume I.*)

(*Fol. 292*) *Catalogus missionum Societatis Jesu in statibus unitis Americae.*

Collegium Georgiopolitanum. Patres 4. Scholastici 7. Frat. 17. Sacerdotes saeculares 1.

Domus studiorum in Washington (civitate). Patres 2. Scholastici 7. Frat. 3. Novitiatus apud White Marsh. Patres 1. Novitii 9. Frat. 10. Sacerdotes saeculares 1.

In comitatu Principis Georgii.

Missiones quae pertinent ad White-Marsh.

1. Ecclesia in praedio White-Marsh.
2. Annapolis sacellum in domo privata, distat 14 mill.
3. Praedium domini Young in quo conveniunt plurimi catholici, distat 6 mill.
4. Congregatio McGruder. Distat 19 milliari.

Pro his omnibus unus sacerdos saecularis et Pater magister novitiorum.

Missiones in comitatu Principis Georgii quae pertinent ad Sanctum Thomam.

1. Congregatio vulgo Domini Diggs sacellum distat 20 mill.
2. Congregatio Boone's chapel. Distat 25 mill.
3. Congregatio Piscataway. Distat 23 mill.
4. Congregatio Mattawoman.

Missiones in comitatu Caroli quae pertinent etiam ad Sanctum Thomam.

1. Ecclesia in praedio Sancti Thomae.
2. Congregatio Pomfret's Neck 16 mill.
3. Congregatio Cornevall's Neck 16 mill.
4. Congregatio Cedar's Point. Nulla ibi ecclesia.

⁴ HUGHES, o. c., Documents, Vol. i, part i, pp. 335–38, gives further additions to this catalogue, from a list sent in 1765, by Father Hunter to the Provincial, Father Dennett.

5. Congregatio Chekomcen. Nulla ecclesia, distat 20.
6. Congregatio Newport. Distat 10.
7. Congregatio Cob-Neck. Distat 20.
8. Congregatio Upper-Zachiah. Distat 18.
9. Congregatio Lower-Zachiah. Distat 18.

Pro omnibus his tredecim missionibus sunt tres Patres e Societate, quorum unus est valde infirmus, et unus sacerdos saecularis.

In Comitatu Sanctae Mariae.

1. Ecclesia in praedio Newtown.
2. Congregatio Nostrae Dominae vulgo Meddley Neck. Distat 12.
3. Congregatio Sancti Joannis. Distat 12.
4. Congregatio S. Aloysii. Distat 6.
5. Congregatio S. Josephi. Distat 12.
6. Congregatio SS. Cordis. Distat 12.
7. Congregatio parva trans flumen Patuxent. Distat 20.

Pro his 7 unus Pater e Societate Jesu, sed propter infirmitatem nunquam praedicat, et duo saeculares sacerdotes.

Missiones in comitatu Sanctae Mariae quae pertinent ad praedium Sancti Ignatii.

1. Ecclesia in praedio.
2. Congregatio Sancti Nicolai. Distat 17.
3. Congregatio Domini Smith. Distat 12.

Duo Patres e Societate et unus Frater coadjutor.

In Marylandia.

1. In civitate Frederick-town ecclesia et domus cum praedio parvo.
2. Ecclesia in Carroll's Manor. Distans 17 mill.

Unus Pater e Societate.

In littore orientali vulgo Eastern Shore.

1. Ecclesia in praedio Bohemia.
2. Ecclesia S. Josephi.

Unus Pater et frater coadjutor e Societate et unus sacerdos saecularis.

In Pennsylvania.

1. In civitate Philadelphiae, ecclesia S. Josephi et domus, unus saecularis.
2. Ecclesia in praedio Cochenhoben [Goshenhoppen]. Unus e Societate.
3. In civitate Lancaster. Duo sacerdotes saeculares.
4. In civitate Elizabeth, quae distat a residentia Lanc. 30 mill.
5. Mount Libanon, 20 mill.
6. Harrisbourg (oppidum). 35 mill.
7. Sunbury. 25 mill.
8. Chester County. 15 mill.
9. Little Britain. 18 mill.

Duo sacerdotes saeculares.

Conewago etiam in Pennsylvania.

1. Ecclesia in praedio.
2. Carlisle ecclesia et domus (civitas est) distat 30.
3. In civitate York ecclesia distat 22.
4. In oppido Littlestown, distat 6.
5. Brand sacellum, distat 9.
6. South Mountains, distat 150.

Duo Patres Societatis. Unus vero senex et infirmus, ut nunquam exire potest, audit tamen confessiones.

Numerus sociorum in tota missione Americana:

Sacerdotes 26.

Saeculares sacerdotes in nostris missionibus sunt septem.

Scholastici 25.

Nov. scholastici 10.

Coadjutores 25.

Nov. coadjutores 9.

(Somma) 95.
